

HONORING TEDDY PENDERGRASS  
(1950–2010)

## HON. CHAKA FATTAH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2010

Mr. FATTAH. Madam Speaker, Teddy Pendergrass lived many remarkable lives—a life of song, rich and sensuous, a life of determination to overcome a difficult childhood in North Philadelphia, and finally a life of perseverance and triumph against the greatest odds imaginable.

When Teddy Pendergrass, at the too-young age of 59, died January 13 in a hospital several miles from where he grew up in North Philadelphia, the tributes flowed from across the nation and the world. But they weren't nostalgic reminiscences for a faded star whose career might have been cut short by a paralyzing automobile accident. The praise and admiration were present-tense, for a man who—by guts and willpower—kept performing, kept filling concert halls, stayed vibrant on the playlists and wherever music is enjoyed.

Even more, Teddy Pendergrass was a man of character and example. He grew in stature with the passage of years. He endured the hard solitary work of rehab so that he could return to the limelight—in a wheelchair, but ever-soulful. The tragedy of March 18, 1982 did not render Teddy bitter or consumed with self-pity. He emphatically made it clear that “there is life after paralysis”.

Offstage, Teddy Pendergrass worked to inspire and encourage others. He established the Teddy Pendergrass Alliance to raise money for other victims of spinal cord injuries. He partnered with the National Spinal Cord Association. He inspired young artists—and youth people with severed spinal cords.

Theodore DeReese Pendergrass, born March 26, 1950, had a strong and special relationship with his mother Ida Burgess Pendergrass—and with the gift of music that she nurtured. Ida would stand young Teddy, at the age of two, on a chair in church and he would sing praises to the Lord. At age ten he was licensed to the Gospel Ministry. Soon he was playing the drums for various local groups including The Cadillacs. It was while drumming for Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes that his vocal gift was discovered.

In 1972, he signed to Gamble & Huff's Philadelphia International Records label. “Teddy Bear” was smoldering hot—in his recordings, on stage, everywhere he went. He recorded 10 platinum (million-selling) albums in a row for Gamble and Huff at Philadelphia International Records. No one who heard them will ever forget hits like “Love TKO”, “Turn Off the Lights”, “Feel The Fire.” And of course, “If You Don't Know Me By Now.” His “women only” concerts are legendary.

A year after his accident Teddy Pendergrass returned to recording, memorably in a 1984 duet with Whitney Houston, titled “Hold Me.” He rolled that wheelchair onstage at JFK Stadium to perform at the unforgettable “Live Aid” charity concert. He produced a 1998 autobiography, undertook a 2002–2003 concert tour, and all the while serving as an inspiration to many young artists. The milestone of his life was “Teddy 25—A Celebration of Life, Hope and Possibilities” at Philadelphia's Academy of Music. It was a fund

raiser for his Alliance, and it marked 25 years since the accident.

Then, at last, came retirement. This past year, Teddy Pendergrass faced a battle with colon cancer that his great heart and courage could not overcome.

Teddy Pendergrass loved life and would light up any room with his million dollar smile. He loved his family and held them close to his heart. This love was evidenced in the way that he encouraged family and friends to share private moments with him. He and his wife Joan enjoyed spending every possible moment together; laughter was a tremendous part of their life. Their love for each other was ordained by God and they became one in marriage. Teddy returned to the Lord Jesus Christ and together they joined the Enon Tabernacle Baptist Church.

Teddy leaves to cherish his memory, his loving wife, Joan Pendergrass, his devoted mother, Ida Pendergrass, his children, Teddy II (daughter-in-law, Felicia), Tishia (son-in-law, Cedric) and LaDonna; stepdaughters Sherilla LeStrade and Jessica Avila; grandchildren, Montaurius Drane, Desaray Drane, Teddy Pendergrass III, Alana Nida Sky Pendergrass, Jasmine LeStrade, Gabriel Gomes and Jeremiah Sanford. In addition to his immediate family, Teddy will be dearly missed by his godchildren, family and friends; especially, his cousins, Jerry and Francina Pendergrass, George Mouzon, Pee Wee Mosley and Neverland Dent; his special family; Joyce Canderlero, Edwin Dereese Canderlero, Antonio Canderlero, Keya Perinchief, Kylied Perinchief, Lori Edmonds, Paya Williams, “second Mom” Louise Hollerway, his manager's Danny Markus, Shep Gordon and Allan Strahi and longtime friend, Henry Evans.

It is as Enon Tabernacle, one of Philadelphia's great churches, that a Celebration of Life will be conducted on Saturday, January 23, at 10 a.m. Teddy Pendergrass lived a life worthy of celebration at every level. His music lives on. His spirit lives on. His fierce determination and zest for life endures. This is how we know him, by now.

## RECOGNIZING DEPUTY CURTIS CEPHAS FOR RECEIVING THE MEDAL OF VALOR

### HON. JEFF MILLER

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2010

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Deputy Curtis Cephas of the Escambia County Sheriff's Department upon receiving the Medal of Valor, the department's highest honor. Deputy Cephas risked his life in service to the community, and I am proud to recognize his selfless act of heroism.

On July 3, 2009, while off-duty, Deputy Cephas was informed by a local citizen that a nearby house was on fire. Deputy Cephas ran to the house, noticed smoke pouring from inside, and began searching the home to determine if anyone was inside. After discovering that the home's occupant was inside and unable to escape the fire, Deputy Cephas proceeded to enter the burning house and found the resident inside and immobile. He succeeded in pulling the man outside and safely away from the fire.

For his courage and bravery at extreme risk to his own life, Deputy Cephas is being awarded the Medal of Valor, the highest award of the Escambia County Sheriff's Department.

Madam Speaker, on behalf of the United States Congress, I am privileged to recognize Deputy Curtis Cephas for going above and beyond the call of duty. He is a hero to the community and a true public servant. My wife Vicki and I wish Deputy Cephas and his family all the best for the future.

## RECOGNIZING CAPTAIN JOSEPH A. IANNITTI—SCOTTSDALE HEALTHCARE'S “SALUTE TO MILITARY” HONOREE

### HON. HARRY E. MITCHELL

OF ARIZONA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2010

Mr. MITCHELL. Madam Speaker, I rise today to honor a member of the Armed Forces from my home state of Arizona. Each month, Scottsdale Healthcare recognizes service members who perform diligent service to our country. Scottsdale Healthcare has recognized Captain Joseph A. Iannitti for the month of January.

I commend Scottsdale Healthcare for paying tribute to such an exceptional service member for his bravery and service to our country.

Captain Joseph A. Iannitti is the son of Susan Iannitti who has worked for Scottsdale Healthcare for 23 years and is currently the Supervisor of Registration.

Captain Iannitti has served in the Army for nine years and is currently the Executive Officer for the 286th Signal Company, 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade at Fort Bliss, Texas. Next month, he will deploy to Kuwait where he will be serving a one year tour of duty as a Communications Officer for the 3rd Battalion, 43rd Air Defense Artillery Regiment, 11th Air Defense Artillery Brigade.

During his service Joseph has received numerous awards, all of which serve as a tribute to his honorable character. He was awarded two commendation medals, an achievement medal, good conduct medal, national defense service medal, reserve mobilization medal and a global war of terrorism service medal.

Madam Speaker, please join me in recognizing this courageous service member for his outstanding contributions and service to our country.

## HIGHPOINT'S GUERRA HONORED WITH STATE LAWN CARE AWARD

### HON. TIM RYAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, January 21, 2010

Mr. RYAN of Ohio. Madam Speaker, the Ohio Lawn Care Association recently announced Christopher Guerra, of Highpoint Lawn Service in Stow, as the recipient of its first-ever Ohio Lawn Care Applicator of the Year Award. The new annual award recognized Guerra for his dedication to customer service and 7 years of work experience at Highpoint. He was presented a plaque by OLCA Publicity Committee Chair, Rob Palmer,